1 2 3	Daniel R. Barnhart, WSB No. 20886 Bullard Smith Jernstedt Wilson 1000 SW Broadway, Suite 1900 Portland, OR 97205 (503) 248-1134				
4 5 1	Of Attorneys for Defendant	PILED LODGED RECEIVED OCT 2 4 2003 CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON AT TACOMA			
	03-CV-05578-PET	DEPUTY			
9	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT				
10	FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON AT TACOMA				
11	HEATHER ATTERBERRY,	CV03-5578 RJB			
12	Plaintiff,	USDC Case No.			
13	ν.	Clark County Superior Court Case No. 03 2 05230 6			
14	NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS COMPANY,	DEFENDANT'S NOTICE OF REMOVAL			
15	a public utilities corporation,				
16	Defendant.				
17	Pursuant to 28 USC § 1446, Defer	dant Northwest Natural Gas Company			
18	("Northwest Natural"), alleges that:				
19	1. On or about October 8, 2003, Plaintiff Heather Atterberry ("Plaintiff")				
20	commenced the above titled civil action against Northwest Natural in the Clark County				
21	Superior Court. This lawsuit is now pending in that court as Case No. 03-2-05230-6.				
22	2. On October 8, 2003, Plaintiff served the attached Complaint (Exhibit				
23	A) and Summons (Exhibit B) on Northwest Natural.				
24	3. No further proceedings have taken place in this lawsuit in the Clark				
25	County Superior Court.				
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Page	DEFENDANT'S NOTICE OF REMOVAL - 1				

Case No.

PAGE

- 3.1 Ms. Atterberry realleges and incorporates by this reference each and every allegation set forth in paragraphs 1.1 through 2.9 above.
- 3.2 NWN discriminately discharged Ms. Atterberry because of her pregnancy in violation of RCW 49.60.180(2), recovery available under RCW 49.60.030 includes

Exhibit A / Page 2

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costs and attorney's fees; WAC 162-30-020 includes pregnancy and pregnancy related conditions within the term "sex."

- 3.3 NWN discriminately discharged Ms. Atterberry because of her pregnancy in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sec. 2000e-2(a), recovery available under Sec. 2000e-5 includes costs and attorney's fees; Sec. 2000e(k) includes pregnancy and related medical conditions within the term "sex."
- 3.4 Prior to Ms. Atterberry notifying her supervisor that she was pregnant, Ms. Atterberry had a record of exemplary work performance and positive feedback from her supervisor.
- 3.5 In approximately May 2002, Ms. Atterberry received an excellent work review from her supervisor, and was thus given a merit increase in pay.
- 3.6 Ms. Atterberry was assigned one of the largest meter reading areas in Vancouver, covering 21 different routes, which meant reading approximately 600-800 meters a day.
- 3.7 Only after notifying her supervisor in December 2001 of her pregnancy (and intended use of parental leave after child birth) and after she began taking pregnancy leave did Ms. Atterberry begin to receive negative feedback on her work performance, and become the subject of continual investigation until her termination.
- 3.8 NWN terminated Ms. Atterberry's employment within four months of notifying her supervisor of her pregnancy, very soon after taking time off work because of prenatal illnesses, and several months before the birth of her child and thus her anticipated use of the Family Medical Leave Act.
- 3.9 The reasons given for Ms. Atterberry's paid administrative leave and subsequent termination were falsifying meter readings, poor work performance based on unread meters (caused by her absences because of prenatal illnesses), her unread meters causing NWN's computers to automatically generate estimated bills (as is customary) which resulted in "erroneous billing," and disputed not read codes on two meters.
- 3.10 Ms. Atterberry never knowingly or intentionally entered a false meter reading.

- 3.11 NWN never provided any evidence of Ms. Atterberry knowingly or intentionally entering a false meter reading, and only one assertion was made that she read a meter wrong. The meter that she was alleged to have read wrong, thus causing an erroneous bill, was actually the result of NWN's computer automatically generating a bill.
- 3.12 Ms. Atterberry suffered severe anemia during part of her pregnancy, as well as other prenatal ills.
- 3.13 During her pregnancy, there were times Ms. Atterberry had to be absent from work in order to go to prenatal medical appointments. Ms. Atterberry always gave sufficient notice to her supervisor regarding her upcoming appointments.
- 3.14 During her pregnancy, there were also times Ms. Atterberry was unable to finish her route or even come to work because of prenatal illnesses, causing meters to be unread.
- 3.15 Ms. Atterberry always notified her supervisor when she was unable to come to work or complete her route.
- 3.16 Every day that Ms. Atterberry was absent, whether a full or partial day, she was not able to finish her meter reading route for that day.
- 3.17 Even with doctor's notes as evidence, Mr. Watts continually questioned Ms. Atterberry's absences for prenatal illnesses.
- 3.18 During Ms. Atterberry's April 10, 2002 Employee Termination meeting and in Mr. Watt's subsequent memo regarding the meeting, Mr. Watt characterized Ms. Atterberry's absences (which caused unread meters) as the result of her dislike for the job rather than a result of her prenatal illnesses.
- 3.19 In February 2002, Ms. Atterberry met with her supervisor, Troy Watts, to request a much larger work uniform to accommodate her significant change in body size due to her pregnancy. No such uniform was ever given Ms. Atterberry.
- 3.20 Mr. Watts did a field check on two of Ms. Atterberry's meters for which she had entered not read codes. It was highly unusual for Supervisor Troy Watts to do a field check on the proper entering of not read codes (unless there was a high number of unexplained not read codes).

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- 3.21 Ms. Atterberry's absences (and thus inability to complete her routes while absent) were not unexplained because they were the result of prenatal illnesses, NWN was on notice that she was pregnant and suffered prenatal illnesses, and Ms. Atterberry always notified her supervisor as to when and why she was absent, providing medical documentation when possible.
- 3.22 NWN only cited two examples of erroneous not read codes in Ms. Atterberry's April 10, 2003 termination meeting. Both examples misrepresented the facts and falsely stated that Ms. Atterberry entered erroneous not read codes.
- 3.23 In the alternative, even if Ms. Atterberry had entered in two erroneous not read codes as alleged, this is a common occurrence among meter readers, and could be the result of mistakenly pressing the wrong button as to which of the preformatted codes best described why the meter could not be read.
- 3.24 The buttons a meter reader presses to enter in codes are small in size and close together on a small handheld device. Ms. Atterberry's pregnancy caused swelling in her fingers, which resulted in difficulty in pressing the small buttons on the handheld device without pressing the surrounding buttons.
- 3.25 Even if Ms. Atterberry had mistakenly entered in two erroneous not read codes, NWN does not terminate non-pregnant employees under those circumstances.
- 3.26 It is a common occurrence for non-pregnant meter readers not to be able to read every single meter, and it is NWN's customary business practice to have computers automatically generate an estimated bill for unread meters if it is near the end of the billing cycle.
- 3.27 Meter readers are not disciplined or terminated when NWN's computers automatically generate estimated bills.
- 3.28 Only after Ms. Atterberry notified NWN of her pregnancy and began to take pregnancy leave was she targeted for close scrutinization, and held her to an unprecedented and much higher standard than other meter readers.
- 3.29 Ms. Atterberry's pregnancy and related conditions were a substantial factor, if not the sole factor, in NWN terminating her employment.
- 3.30 As a result of NWN's actions, Ms. Atterberry has been damaged in an amount to be proven at trial.

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COUNT II

(Deprivation and Withholding of Wages)

- 4.1 Ms. Atterberry realleges and incorporates by this reference each and every allegation set forth in paragraphs 1.1 through 3.30 above.
- 4.2 NWN willfully and intentionally deprived and continues to deprive Ms, Atterberry of her wages for approximately the last two weeks of her work, and other time and benefits, the exact amount to be determined at trial, in violation of RCW 49.52.050(2); recovery available under RCW 49.52.070 includes double damages, attorney's fees, and costs.
- 4.3 In the alternative, at the end of Ms. Atterberry's final pay period after being discharged, NWN withheld and continues to withhold her wages for approximately the last two weeks of her work, and other time and benefits, the exact amount to be determined at trial, in violation of RCW 49.48.010; recovery available under RCW 49.48.030 includes attorney's fees and costs.
- 4.4 Subsequent to her final pay period, Ms. Atterberry called the person in charge of payroll in Human Resources several times requesting her wages, and each time she was told she would not be paid.
- 4.5 Each time Ms. Atterberry requested her wages, she was told they were being withheld to pay back NWN for leave she had taken as a result of her pregnancy, and that in fact she owed NWN money for time she had taken off work for her prenatal illnesses. No accounting was ever provided as to how this conclusion was arrived at.
- 4.6 At no time did Ms. Atterberry did not knowingly submit or consent to any wages being withheld.

COUNT III

(Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress)

- 5.1 Ms. Atterberry realleges and incorporates by this reference each and every allegation set forth in paragraphs 1.1 through 4.6 above.
- 5.2 Ms. Atterberry was the single mother of a seven year old child, and was approximately seven months pregnant with her second child when NWN terminated her employment.

Complaint

- 5.3 Because NWN terminated Ms. Atterberry, refused to pay her final wages, and contested her unemployment compensation benefits, as a single mother Ms. Atterberry was without any source of income and no way to pay for rent or other necessities of life for her or her seven year old son. Thus Ms. Atterberry could not afford to continue her medical benefits, and faced being 7 months pregnant with a second child without any source of income or medical benefits.
- 5.4 The trauma of Ms. Atterberry's termination caused her to suffer depression, anxiety attacks, loss of appetite, dizziness spells, paranoia, and extreme sensitivity to worrying and becoming upset.
- 5.5 NWN's actions in using pretextual reasons to terminate Ms. Atterberry's employment because of her pregnancy in the face of her being a single mother pregnant with a second child, leaving her without any income and thus no way to pay for medical benefits, and subsequently fighting her unemployment compensation claims, was extreme and outrageous conduct, beyond all decency, and utterly intolerable in a civilized society.
- 5.6 As a result of NWN's actions, Ms. Atterberry has been damaged in an amount to be proven at trial.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendants as follows:

- 6.1 For general, special, and punitive damages in an amount to be determined at the time of trial;
 - 6.2 For attorney's fees, costs, and disbursements herein to be taxed; and
 - 6.3 For such other and further relief as the court deems just and equitable.

Dated this 80 day of October 2003.

David Schoenborn, WSBA #33346 Law Office of David Schoenborn 310 East 12th Street, #A

Vancouver, WA 98660

Tel 360-693-9998 Fax 360-694-3533

Attorney for Plaintiff

Complaint

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Exhibit A / Page 1

Date: April 10, 2002

To: Personnel File - Heather Atterberry

From: Troy E. Watts

Subj.: Employee Termination

On Wednesday, April 10, 2002, at 0730, a meeting was conducted at our Central Service Center with Vancouver Meter Reading Employee, Heather Atterberry.

In addition to Ms. Atterberry, others present at this meeting included Chief Union Steward, Diana Salathe, Meter Reading Manager, David W. Aimone and myself, Meter Reading Supervisor, Troy Watts.

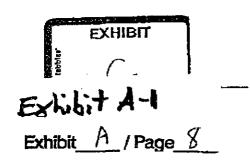
The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Ms. Atterberry's work performance on meter reading routes 56-0672 and 56-0772.

Ms. Afterberry's work performance on both of these workdays reflected a large number of peculiar meter readings that she had recorded for our customers. In addition, she had not read, or skipped over a number of customer meters without giving an explanation of her actions. This resulted in the estimation of the customer's accounts.

There were two customer accounts that she failed to read, while she entered not read reason codes of "meter blocked" and "gate locked". I personally field checked both of these accounts, and had no problem in obtaining the meter readings for these customer's accounts

This information was presented to Ms. Atterberry. She was asked for an explanation of her unsatisfactory work performance.

She responded by stating that she had entered false meter readings on the customer accounts in question without actually reading their meters. She confessed to skipping over, or just not reading meters. She had no explanation for the two customer accounts that she recorded not reasons of "meter blocked" and "gate locked."



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DISMISSAL AND NOTICE OF RIGHTS						
To:	Heather Atterba 3317 Ne 143 Av Vancouver, WA	е	From;	EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION SEATTLE DISTRICT OFFICE FEDERAL OFFICE BLDG. 909 1st AVE., SUITE 400		
	On behalf of person(s) CONFIDENTIAL (29 C	aggrieved whose identity is IFR § 1601.7(a))		SEATTLE, WA 98104-1061		
OC Chan			presentative	Telephone No.		
D-200	3-00191	STEVE	HUNT, 706 Cord	. (206) 220-6855		
	The facts alleged in the Your place getions did not the Respondent employer charge was not little the Respondent employer charge. Having been given a interviews/conferences. While reasonable effor You were given 30 day. The EEOC issues the festablishes violations to any other issues that	mely filed with EEOC; In other 30 days in which to respond to respond to the made to locate you, as to accept a reasonable set of the statutes. This does not the statutes of the state or CHARGING PART	under any of the statutes and by the Americans with mber of employees or is a words, you waited too literate to the extent that it we were not able to do statement offer that affords dupon its investigation, to certify that the respondeng been raised by this children is imployment professional tair employment professional tair employ	not otherwise covered by the statutes. not otherwise covered by the statutes. ong after the date(s) of the alleged discrimination to file your wide information, failed to appear or be available for was not possible to resolve your charge. o. full relief for the harm you alleged. the EEOC is unable to conclude that the information obtained ent is in compliance with the statutes. No finding is made as narge. actices agency that investigated this charge.		
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		On beh	alf of the Commission	ı.		
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NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS Co. 220 NW Second Ave. Portland OR. 97209

nalosure(s)

DAVID SCHOENBORN

EN161+ B-1

Her only explanation of her unsatisfactory work performance was that she was "tired" of her job. She liked our company, but her job had just become too demanding, and she could no longer keep us with the workload.

Ms. Atterberry was informed that her explanation of her unsatisfactory work performance was not acceptable. She had falsified meter readings, not read codes, and just passed by customer's meters, without attempting to get a meter reading. Each of these factors resulted in the erroneous billing of our customer's accounts.

In conclusion of our meeting, I informed Ms. Afterberry that I was placing her on paid administrative leave for the day, pending further investigation of her actions. I told her that I would call her at her home with a decision on how we were going to deal with the severity of her unsatisfactory work performance.

Upon further review of this matter with Chief Steward, Diana Salathe, and Meter Reading Manager David W. Aimone, it was agreed that Ms. Atterberry's unsatisfactory work performance in falsifying customer's records warranted her termination from our company.

I called Ms Atterberry on two occasions the evening of Wednesday, April 10th. No one answered her phone, so I left a message each time informing Ms. Atterberry of our decision to terminate her employment.

Troy Watts Meter Reading Supervisor

Cc: Diana Salathe, Chief Steward Rich Oare, Local 11

Exhibit A-2

1 2 OCT 0 8 2003 3 JoAnna Modride, Clerk, Clark Co. 4 5 6 7 8 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON 9 IN AND FOR CLARK COUNTY 10 2 05230 11 HEATHER ATTERBERRY, Case No.: 12 13 Plaintiff. 14 RECEIVED Summons 15 NORTHWEST NATURAL GAS OCT 0 8 2003 🗞 16 COMPANY, a public utilities 17 corporation, 18 Defendants. 19 20 21 TO THE DEFENDANT: 22 A lawsuit has been started against you in the above entitled court by the above 23. named Plaintiff. Plaintiff's claim is stated in the written Complaint, a copy of which is 24

served upon you with this Summons.

In order to defend against this lawsuit, you must respond to the Complaint by stating your defense in writing, and by serving a copy upon the undersigned attorney for the Plaintiff this summons within twenty (20) days after the service of the Summons, excluding the day of service, or a default judgment may be entered against you without notice. A default judgment is one where Plaintiff is entitled to what he asks for because

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Summons

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Exhibit 13 / Page

you have not responded. If you serve a notice of appearance on the undersigned attorney, you are entitled to notice before a default judgment may be entered. You may demand that the Plaintiff file this lawsuit with the court. If you do so, the demand must be in writing and must be served upon the person signing this summons. Within 14 days after you serve the demand, the Plaintiff must file this lawsuit with the court, or the service on you of this summons and complaint will be void. If you wish to seek the advice of an attorney in this matter, you should do so promptly so that your written response, if any, may be served on time. This summons is issued pursuant to Rule 4 of the Superior Court Civil Rules of the State of Washington. Dated this 9 day of October, 2003. David Schoenborn, WSBA #33346 Law Office of David Schoenborn 310 East 12th Street, #A Vancouver, WA 98660

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1		CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE				
2	I hereby certify that I served the foregoing DEFENDANT'S NOTICE OF					
	REM	REMOVAL on:				
3 4		David Schoenborn, WSBA#33346 Law Office of David Schoenborn				
5		310 East 12 th Street, #A Vancouver, WA 98660				
6		Fax: (360) 694-3533				
7		Attorney for Plaintiff				
8 9	र्ल	by mailing a true and correct copy to the last known address of each person listed. It was contained in a sealed envelope, with postage paid, addressed as stated above, and deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in Portland, Oregon.				
10		by causing a true and correct copy to be hand-delivered to the last known address of each person listed. It was contained in a sealed envelope and addressed as stated				
11		above.				
12		by causing a true and correct copy to be delivered via overnight courier to the last known address of each person listed. It was contained in a sealed envelope, with courier fees paid, and addressed as stated above.				
13		• •				
14		by faxing a true and correct copy to the last known facsimile number of each person listed, with confirmation of delivery. It was addressed as stated above.				
15 16		by emailing a true and correct copy to the last known email address of each person listed, with confirmation of delivery.				
17		DATED: October 24, 2003.				
		$\bigcap \Omega \Omega \Omega$				
18		Daniel R. Barnhart, WSB No. 20886				
19		Attorneys for Defendant Northwest Natural				
20		Gas Company				
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23						
24						
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Page DEFENDANT'S NOTICE OF REMOVAL - 3

Case No.

(503) 248 -1134